saying that the Indian Government's foreign policy is in danger of becoming hostage of its "obsession" with securing a permanent seat in the UN Security Council;

(b) if so, Government's reaction in this regard; and

(c) whether our efforts are effective to mobilize world opinion to India becoming a permanent member of Security Council?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Government of India is engaged with other Member States of the United Nations on various issues related to the reform of the United Nations, including reform of the Security Council. The Government believes that the UN Security Council should be expanded in both the permanent and non-permanent categories so that it reflects contemporary geopolitical realities. India's impeccable credentials to become a permanent member of the Security Council are widely recognized and there has been a steady accretion of support for India's candidature. The Government is continuing its efforts to mobilize further support for India's candidature. The Government's foreign policy is aimed at achieving several objectives and securing a permanent seat in the UN Security Council is one of the important objectives.

Amritsar Lahore bus service

190. SHRI VARINDER SINGH BAJWA:
SHRIMATI SUKHBUNS KAUR:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether as a further confidence building measures to improve and increase people to people contacts between India and Pakistan, Government have introduced a weekly bus service between Amritsar and Lahore;

(b) whether bus service has been started as per schedule;

(c) if so, the welcome result of the introduction of the bus service so far;

(d) if not, the reasons therefore and by when a fresh date is likely to be announced; and

(e) what steps have been taken to prevent misuse of the bus service for smuggling and illegal traffic of arms, drugs and humans?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) to (e) During the second round of India-Pakistan technical meeting held in September 2005 on the subject, it was decided to operationalize the Amritsar-Lahore bus service by first half of November 2005. The operationalisation of the bus service was, however, postponed due to the earthquake that hit Pakistan on October 8, 2005. Fresh dates for the trial run and the signing of the agreement are being worked out with Pakistan. Government will take all security implications into consideration, and people will be able to travel on the bus only after due procedure and checks have been completed.

Indo-Iran gas pipeline project

†191. PROF. R.B.S. VARMA:
SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether there would be any negative impact on gas pipeline project as India is not supporting the nuclear programme of Iran;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reaction of Government of Iran in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) to (c) The Iranian Embassy in New Delhi had clarified on September 28, 2005 that agreements on the LNG deal and gas pipeline between the two countries were "still in force and passing through their normal process." Talks on the Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline project are progressing. The 2nd Indo-Iran Special Joint Working Group on gas pipeline project was held in Tehran on October 24, 2005.

Foreign Minister's Pakistan visit

†192. SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the former Minister of External Affairs was on a tour of Pakistan recently;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.